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Senate

A SMALL TOWN WITH A BIG HEART

Mr. DASCHLE. Madam President, Independence Day marks a time for Americans to celebrate our country's creation through an epic struggle for freedom and liberty. Families come together to commemorate the qualities displayed by the early patriots: a commitment to democratic expression, a yearning to be free from tyranny, and a sober willingness to sacrifice life itself on behalf of these aims.

This Fourth of July, thousands of men and women in our military will be in Iraq, dedicating themselves to the reconstruction of this country that has lived so long in the shackles of Saddam Hussein's reign of terror. Our objective is much the same as in 1776: creating conditions in which the people are protected from oppression and in which free expression and democratic government can flourish. We know this is not an easy task—indeed, our forces continue to suffer casualties but its success or failure will be very important, not only to Iraq, but also to the future of this country and the entire Middle East.

I am so proud of the service members who have stepped forward, making tremendous sacrifices, to fight for the liberty of a foreign people in a foreign land. These men and women have been unflinching in their resolve and have already accomplished much.

I am particularly proud of the roughly 2,000 South Dakotans who have been involved in the Iraq campaign. Many of them are South Dakota National Guard members, who participated in a mobilization with few precedents in our State's history. It was, by far, the largest mobilization since World War II. At the time the fighting began, units from more than 20 communities had been called up, from Elk Point in the south to Lemmon in the north, from Watertown in the east to Custer in the west. Indeed, our State's mobilization rate ranked among the highest of all the States on a per-capita basis. Also, hundreds of personnel from Ellsworth Air Force Base were deployed overseas at the height of the campaign.

But no community in South Dakota, or perhaps the even country, is more remarkable in its contribution to this effort than the small town of Frederick.

Frederick lies roughly 30 miles from my hometown of Aberdeen. It is a small, close-knit community with a population of fewer than 300 people. But twenty-six of Frederick's sons and daughters answered the call to duty—nearly ten percent of its population! Frederick's military personnel are serving in nearly every branch of the armed forces, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and Army Reserve. To put this tremendous display of

patriotism in perspective, the boroughs of New York City would need to send roughly 750,000 people to match Frederick's effort.

On July Fourth, Frederick is commemorating the patriotism of its service members with a community parade and celebration that will feature a flyover by a B-1 bomber out of Ellsworth Air Force Base. They will honor their friends, neighbors and loved ones serving in the U.S. military, and I want to join them by recognizing them here today. They are:

Air Force: A1C Justin Wallace, SSgt. Jason Strand, Senior MSgt LeRoy Fiekens, SSgt. Tara Meyers, A1C Paul Sumption, and TSgt. Reiff Mikkonen.

Air Force National Guard: SSgt. Brian Achen.

Army: LTC Ronald Claeys, PFC Gary Kurtzhals, and PFC Mikael Schmit.

Army National Guard: SPC Stephen Achen, Sgt. Ryan Henningsen, Sgt. Robert Heider, PFC Jeff Pierce, Cpl. Mike Bunke, Col. Gordon Niva, SSgt. Eric Kinslow, Sgt. Dave Gunther, SPC Ben Deuter and Sgt. Ryan Bakeburg.

Army Reserve: Maj. Susan Lahr and PFC Glenn Gunther.

Navy: PFC Josh Larsen and Petty Officer Randy Jensen.

Marine Corps: Sgt. Eric Thompson and MSgt. Scott McCullough.

Let me also take a moment to recognize another young patriot from Frederick, 10-year-old Peyton Healy. Though she does not know any of the 26 deployed soldiers personally, Peyton took the initiative to develop a way for the people of Frederick to support troops serving abroad, creating the "Project Patriotic Penny Fund." Working with the local American Legion post, she placed donation cans in area businesses to raise money for postage on care packages to the troops. She hoped to raise roughly \$100—enough to pay for one package to every Frederick service member. The people of Frederick placed \$195 in these cans—19,500 pennies. They also donated supplies for the packages, such as crossword puzzles, pens and paper, batteries, hygiene products, and candy.

Most importantly, Peyton helped us see the defining characteristic of the people of Frederick. She helped us see that the people of this tiny town have enormous hearts. I call upon my colleagues and the people of this Nation to join with me in commending the people of Frederick, and in celebrating alongside them on Independence Day the democracy and liberty they so proudly defend and promote.